

## AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method for long-range planning for a complex system, comprising:

defining ~~at least one resource description~~ a plurality of agent profiles, wherein ~~a resource description~~ each agent profile comprises a group of ~~resources~~ agents that have similar characteristics, ~~wherein the at least one resource includes resources not currently existing~~, and wherein defining comprises specifying the characteristics, including at least one capability, ~~and~~ at least one performance measure, and at least one attribute specifying a change in the number of agents in the group during a specified time period;

defining at least one work load ~~wherein the at least one work load includes work loads not currently existing~~; and

specifying at least one criteria to be satisfied by a long-range staffing plan; and

calculating an effect of applying the ~~at least one resource description~~ plurality of agent profiles to the at least one work load while satisfying the at least one criteria, wherein the calculated effect includes at least one performance measure for the at least one work load, ~~and an effective cost per hour.~~

wherein the calculating comprises:

adding a first agent from one of the agent profiles to a proposed schedule, wherein there is an available work associated with each agent in the one agent profile, and wherein the proposed schedule is for servicing the at least one workload over a predefined time period;

calculating an effect of adding the first agent, wherein adding an agent includes distributing the available work associated with the agent among the at least one workload;

adding a next agent from one of the agent profiles to the proposed schedule;

calculating an effect of adding the next agent taking into account the effect of having added the first agent; and  
iteratively adding additional agents from the agent profiles to the proposed schedule and iteratively calculating effects of adding the additional agents taking into account each agent already added until the available work for every agent in the plurality of agent profiles has been distributed.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the complex system is a contact center, ~~the at least one resource description includes at least one employee profile,~~ the at least one work load includes at least one queue, and wherein the at least one capability includes a skill set.

3. (Currently Amended)) The method of claim 2, wherein the at least one performance measure includes an efficiency percentage, and wherein applying the plurality of agent profiles ~~at least one resource description~~ to the at least one work load includes staffing the at least one queue with the at least one ~~employee~~ agent profile.

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Cancelled)

6. (Cancelled)

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 3, wherein the characteristics further include:

shrinkage, wherein shrinkage comprises various categories of time for which an employee is paid, but during which the ~~employee~~ agent does not work;

burden, wherein burden comprises various categories of expenses associated with the employee agent including benefit expenses; and  
wage.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 3, wherein specifying characteristics further comprises specifying whether ~~[[a]]~~ the profile may be hired into, and a time period required to bring an employee agent hired into the profile to a predefined level of efficiency.

9. (Original) The method of claim 3, further comprising displaying the calculated effect of the long-range staffing plan, comprising displaying for each queue of the at least one queue for each of a plurality of predefined time periods:

- a contact volume;
- a predefined average handling time goal;
- an actual service level; and
- a required service level.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein displaying further comprises displaying calculated effects of more than one staffing plan on a single display for comparison.

11. (Cancelled)

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~[[4]]~~ 1, wherein the calculated effect further includes an estimated cost of the long-range staffing plan, and wherein the estimated cost of the long-range staffing plan includes a training cost that reflects a period of time required for an employee to reach a predefined level of performance.

14. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[5]] 1, wherein the contact center comprises multiple queues and multiple types of contact media, wherein the skill set includes skills across multiple queues and multiple contact media.

15. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 14, wherein iteratively calculating effects of adding the additional ~~employees~~ agents taking into account each ~~employee~~ agent already added includes assigning additional ~~employees~~ agents across multiple queues and multiple contact media.

16. (Currently Amended) A system for long-range staffing planning in a contact center, wherein the multi-contact center processes a plurality of contact queues comprising a plurality of contact media, the system comprising:

at least one server comprising at least one storage device; and

at least one client processor coupled to the server through a network, wherein the client processor is coupled to a plurality of storage devices, including a storage device that stores instructions that, when executed, cause the at least one client processor to,

receive a definition of at least one employee profile, wherein an employee profile comprises a group of employees that have similar characteristics, wherein the characteristics include a skill set and an efficiency percentage, and at least one attribute specifying a change in the number of employees in the group during a specified time period ~~wherein the at least one employee profile includes employees not currently existing;~~

receive a definition of at least one queue, wherein the at least one queue handles a plurality of contacts through a plurality of contact media;

receiving a specification of at least one criteria to be satisfied by a long-range staffing plan; and

calculating an effect of staffing the at least one queue with the at least one employee profile while satisfying the at least one criteria, wherein the calculated effect includes a service level for the at least one queue, ~~and an effective cost per hour.~~

wherein the calculating comprises:

adding a first employee from the at least one profile to a proposed schedule,  
wherein there is an available work associated with each employee in the at least one profile, and  
wherein the proposed schedule is for servicing the at least one queue over a predefined time  
period;

calculating an effect of adding the first employee, wherein adding an employee  
includes distributing the available work associated with the employee among the at least one  
queue;

adding a next employee from the at least one profile to the proposed schedule;

calculating an effect of adding the next employee taking into account the effect of  
having added the first employee; and

iteratively adding additional employees from the at least one profile to the  
proposed schedule and iteratively calculating effects of adding the additional employees taking  
into account each employee already added until the available work for every employee from the  
at least one profile has been distributed.

17. (Original) The system of claim 16, wherein the calculated effect further includes a queue occupancy for each queue, and an estimated cost of the long-range staffing plan.

18. (Cancelled)

19. (Original) The system of claim 16, wherein calculating the effect of adding the next employee includes redistributing available work among the at least one queue, and recalculating a workload remaining.

20. (Original) The system of claim 16, wherein the characteristics further include:  
shrinkage, wherein shrinkage comprises various categories of time for which an employee is paid, but during which the employee does not work;  
burden, wherein burden comprises various categories of expenses associated with the employee, including benefit expenses; and  
wage.

21. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 16, wherein the characteristics further include whether [[a]] the profile may be hired into, and a time period required to bring an employee hired into the profile to a predefined level of efficiency.

22. (Original) The system of claim 16, wherein the instructions, when executed, further cause the at least one client processor to display the calculated effect of the long-rang staffing plan, comprising displaying for each queue of the at least one queue for each of a plurality of predefined time periods:

a contact volume;  
a predefined average handling time goal;  
an actual service level; and  
a required service level.

23. (Original) The system of claim 22, further comprising displaying calculated effects of more than one staffing plan on a single display for comparison as specified by a user.

24 (Original) The system of claim 23, wherein the calculated effects of each of the more than one staffing plan are arranged as rows and columns and, in response to the user specification, corresponding rows from calculated effects of each of the more than one staffing plan are displayed in proximity to one another.

25. (Original) The system of claim 23, wherein the calculated effects of each of the more than one staffing plan are arranged as rows and columns, and, in response to the user specification, corresponding columns from calculated effects of each of the more than one staffing plan are displayed in proximity to one another.

26. (Original) The system of claim 17, wherein the estimated cost of the long-range staffing plan includes a training cost that reflects a period of time required for an employee to reach a predefined level of performance.

27. (Currently Amended) The system of claim ~~[[18]]~~ 16, wherein iteratively calculating effects of adding the additional employees taking into account each employee already added includes assigning additional employees across multiple queues and multiple contact media.

28 (Original) The system of claim 16, wherein the storage device that stores the instructions is accessed by the at least one processor through the network.

29. (Original) The system of claim 16, wherein the storage device that stores the instructions is the at least one storage device of the server.

30. (Currently Amended) An electromagnetic medium containing executable instructions which, when executed in a processing system, cause the system to generate effects of a proposed long-range staffing plan for a contact center, wherein generating comprises:

defining at least one employee profile, wherein an employee profile comprises a group of employees that have the same skills, ~~wherein the at least one employee profile includes employee profiles not currently existing~~, and wherein defining comprises specifying characteristics, including a skill set, and an efficiency percentage, and at least one attribute specifying a change in the number of employees in the group during a specified time period;

defining at least one queue;

specifying at least one criteria to be satisfied by a long-range staffing plan; and

calculating an effect of staffing the at least one queue with the at least one employee profile while satisfying the at least one criteria, wherein the calculated effect includes a service level for the at least one queue, ~~and an effective cost per hour.~~

wherein the calculating comprises:

adding a first employee from the at least one profile to a proposed schedule,  
wherein there is an available work associated with each employee in the at least one profile, and  
wherein the proposed schedule is for servicing the at least one queue over a predefined time period;

calculating an effect of adding the first employee, wherein adding an employee  
includes distributing the available work associated with the employee among the at least one  
queue;

adding a next employee from the at least one profile to the proposed schedule;



calculating an effect of adding the next employee taking into account the effect of having added the first employee; and

iteratively adding additional employees from the at least one profile to the proposed schedule and iteratively calculating effects of adding the additional employees taking into account each employee already added until the available work for every employee from the at least one profile has been distributed.

31. (Original) The electromagnetic medium of claim 30, wherein the calculated effect further includes a queue occupancy for each queue, and an estimated cost of the long-range staffing plan.

32. (Cancelled)

33. (Original) The electromagnetic medium of claim 30, wherein calculating the effect of adding the next employee includes redistributing available work among the at least one queue, and recalculating a workload remaining.

34. (Original) The electromagnetic medium of claim 30, wherein the characteristics further include:

shrinkage, wherein shrinkage comprises various categories of time for which an employee is paid, but during which the employee does not work;

burden, wherein burden comprises various categories of expenses associated with the employee, including benefit expenses; and

wage.

35. (Original) The electromagnetic medium of claim 30, wherein specifying characteristics further comprises specifying whether a profile may be hired into, and a time period required to bring an employee hired into the profile to a predefined level of efficiency.

36. (Original) The electromagnetic medium of claim 30, further comprising displaying the calculated effect of the long-rang staffing plan, comprising displaying for each queue of the at least one queue for each of a plurality of predefined time periods:

a contact volume;

a predefined average handling time goal;

an actual service level; and

a required service level.

37. (Original) The electromagnetic medium of claim 36, wherein displaying further comprises displaying calculated effects of more than one staffing plan on a single display for comparison.

38. (Original) The electromagnetic medium of claim 37, wherein the calculated effects of each of the more than one staffing plan are arranged as rows and columns, and wherein displaying comprises placing corresponding rows from calculated effects of each of the more than one staffing plan in proximity to one another.

39. (Original) The electromagnetic medium of claim 37, wherein the calculated effects of each of the more than one staffing plan are arranged as rows and columns, and wherein displaying comprises placing corresponding columns from calculated effects of each of the more than one staffing plan in proximity to one another.

40. (Original) The electromagnetic medium of claim 31, wherein the estimated cost of the long-range staffing plan includes a training cost that reflects a period of time required for an employee to reach a predefined level of performance.

41. (Original) The electromagnetic medium of claim ~~[[32]]~~ 30, wherein the contact center comprises multiple queues and multiple types of contact media, wherein the skill set includes skills across multiple queues and multiple contact media.

42. (Original) The electromagnetic medium of claim 41, wherein iteratively calculating effects of adding the additional employees taking into account each employee already added includes assigning additional employees across multiple queues and multiple contact media.

43. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one workload comprises a plurality of queues, wherein each queue is associated with a remaining load and a net staffing, wherein each agent profile is associated with a plurality of Erlang-by-queue factors, and wherein the calculating further comprises:

redistributing work among the agent profiles by computing the plurality of Erlang-by-queue factors for each agent profile;

recalculating load remaining for each of the plurality of queues by computing the net staffing and remaining load associated with each queue; and

repeating the redistributing work and recalculating load steps until the available work of agents in all agent profiles has been distributed.

44. (New) The method of 43, wherein each agent profile further is associated with a headcount, an hours-per-month, a number of queues worked by the profile, a total effective

Erlangs performed by one agent in the agent profile, and wherein the redistributing work step further comprises:

redistributing work among the agent profiles by computing the the plurality of Erlang-by-queue factors for each agent profile based on the associated headcount, the hours-per-month, the number of queues worked by the profile, and the total effective Erlangs.

45. (New) The method of 44, wherein each queue is further associated with a bunch factor, wherein each profile is further associated with a plurality of queue scaling factors, and computing the plurality of Erlang-by-queue factors for each agent profile further comprises:

computing each queue scaling factor based on the corresponding queue bunch factor, the corresponding queue remaining load, and a previous scaling factor;

computing an Erlangs-to-Contribute for the agent profile based on the associated agent profile headcount, hours-per-month, and number of queues worked by the profile; and

computing each of the plurality of Erlang-by-queue factors by multiplying the corresponding queue scaling factor by the computed Erlangs-to-contribute.

46. (New) The method of 43, wherein each queue is further associated with an expected service level, a call volume, an average handle time, a remaining load and a net staffing, and wherein the recalculating load step further comprises:

recalculating load remaining for each of the plurality of queues by computing the net staffing and remaining load associated with each queue, wherein the net staffing is produced by summing across all profiles the Erlang-by-queue factor of the queue being computed, and wherein the remaining load is based on the queue call volume, the queue average handle time, and the queue expected service level.

47. (New) The method of 46, wherein the recalculating load step further comprises:  
calculating the queue expected service level based on the queue net staffing, the queue average handle time, a queue call rate, and a queue goal-seconds.

48. (New) The method of 43, wherein each queue is associated with an occupancy, wherein agent profile is further associated with a load and an hours-per-month, and further comprising the step of:

initializing each agent profile load to zero;

for each agent profile, iterating through each queue for which the profile is set to answer and adding to the agent profile load the remaining load associated with the iterated queue, multiplied by a percentage of the net staffing associated with the iterated queue to which the agent profile contributes; and

for each agent profile, computing the agent profile occupancy by dividing the agent profile load by the agent profile headcount multiplied by the agent profile hours-per-month.

49. (New) The method of 48, further comprising the step of:

computing an occupancy for each queue by dividing queue remaining load by queue net staffing; and

for each agent profile, bounding the agent profile occupancy by the highest value of queue occupancy in the plurality of queues.